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HOW CAN WE IMPROVE EXTENSION PERSONNEL TRAINING?

(A Report of the Fourth Annual Regional Conference on Preservice and Graduate Training of Extension Workers.
Fort Collins, Colorado, May 12-14, 1954)

The Fourth Regional Conference on Preservice and Graduate Training for Extension Workers brought together representatives from five States in the western region and, in addition, another five from outside the region. With a few exceptions, those in attendance were instructors of professional extension courses in their respective States (see attached attendance list). They met with the Land-Grant College Senate Committee on Preservice and Graduate Training for the purpose of reviewing State problems and programs related primarily to those phases of training which are academic in character. One additional problem - that of recruitment - was thought to be of sufficient concern to be included. Dean V. E. Kivlin, Chairman of the Senate Committee, presided at each of the sessions. The program was divided into four major discussions, namely, (1) recruitment, (2) the undergraduate extension courses, (3) programs of graduate study, and (4) the work of the Senate Committee.

I. Recruitment is a One-Sided Problem.

At least for county agricultural agents there is no shortage of available personnel coming from the colleges. In the case of home economics workers, however, the recruitment problem is acute. Not only does the land-grant college fail to provide sufficient recruits, the non-land-grant colleges cannot supply the deficit.

Recruitment is done largely through various college departments. Some State representatives reported a lack of complete cooperation from department heads in their colleges in recruiting personnel. In all colleges some department heads cooperate very well but others send their best prospects to other agencies. Few States reported any effort to keep in touch with former 4-H Club members while they are students. Though they number approximately 40 per cent of the total student body in one State, no systematic effort is made by supervisors or extension course instructors to keep in touch with them. Financing car purchases and no job openings at graduation time were factors in discouraging graduates from going into Extension work.

The following activities have proved their value as reported by various States:

1. In Colorado, the State home demonstration leader meets one class period with the freshman class and again one period with the senior class to acquaint them with career opportunities in Extension.
2. Oregon has located men through the PMA, now the Agricultural Stabilization Service. The closest tie Extension has with girls on the campus comes through the cooperative living house on the campus which is sponsored by the home demonstration units. The college arranges a senior week end when high school boys and girls come to the campus. Extension has about one hour of this time to discuss extension as a career.

3. Washington State extension staff members have an opportunity to visit with students for a limited time through participation in the agricultural orientation course. Six other States reported that their colleges offer orientation courses.
4. In Georgia, the extension course instructor is beginning to get the county extension agents to point out prospective personnel, primarily former 4-H Club members, as they come into the college.
5. Kansas has prepared and is using a leaflet describing extension work as a career and has used a counseling system in which the district agent serves as a counselor to those students interested in extension as a career. District agents, however, are not too active in this way. The best recruiting, as reported by Kansas, is their junior assistant system which they have used for both men and women. The junior assistants do the recruiting for extension when they return to the college for the senior year.
6. Nebraska has an orientation course with the undergraduate course instructors serving as advisors; Nebraska also used the junior assistant system (block semester system) which has proved very satisfactory.
7. Wyoming extension staff members have an opportunity to talk to students in orientation courses in agriculture and home economics.
8. Although Oklahoma has a person who serves as liaison between the resident instruction and extension divisions and who participates in freshmen orientation and sophomore counseling days in addition to teaching three courses, their home demonstration staff has been active in recruitment in other ways. The staff believes that they need to begin recruitment farther back than college. They have gotten the assistance of the State Home Demonstration Council in recruiting for the home economics department. Their home demonstration agents make a list of likely personnel in all home economics fields in their counties and give some idea of the merits of the individuals. In addition, the State staff is working on a new extension career leaflet.
9. Texas reported that the best activity for recruiting which they have tried is a get-together held each semester in connection with the district agent conference. At this time the district agents meet all the students from Texas A. and M. and several other schools who wish to talk with them about extension work as a career.
10. Although home demonstration work in New Mexico feels a shortage of prospective personnel, there are more applications from men than can be used. The college placement service plays a big part in helping locate personnel.

Seven out of the ten States have a leaflet explaining what extension is. Such a publication was thought by the group to be quite essential to interest prospective personnel not already associated with the service in extension as a career.

States would like to have a reliable aptitude test for Extension.

Need was cited for some effective aptitude test for extension workers. Kansas has tried a battery of tests to determine aptitude and they think it a good thing but have not continued it due to a number of circumstances. C. W. Smith of Oregon suggested that the Senate Committee should work out a plan whereby four or five States would join with the Federal Extension office in perfecting an aptitude test for extension. Dr. Howe, a member of the Senate Committee, proposed that the Federal office coordinate the project and that a psychology department of one of the colleges work on it. There was general consensus that we need criteria of county extension agent performance to be used in aptitude testing.

II. Undergraduate Courses in Extension Education Have Values for Extension as Well as Students.

In a panel discussion under the chairmanship of Guy Stewart of Colorado, C. W. Smith (Oregon), J. C. Dodge (Washington), W. T. Kirk (Wyoming), and Leonard Neff (Kansas) discussed the undergraduate extension courses offered in their colleges. Each panel member in turn described the nature of the course work offered.

Oregon has a 3-hour course in the fall term open to junior and senior men and women. Its purpose is to teach the students what extension is and how extension teaches. There are 35 sessions, 14 of which are taught by Mr. Smith and the rest by various extension specialists. The Kelsey and Hearne volume is used as the text.

The topics covered include:

1. Objectives of the course.
2. History, organization, and financing.
3. Interorganizational relationships.
4. What is the job of the county extension agent?
5. Opportunities and satisfactions in Extension.
6. Qualifications and requirements of extension agents.
7. Program determination.
8. Objectives of extension.
9. Program building.
10. Extension work is selling.
11. How extension teaches: Methods, tools, techniques.
12. How home economics teaches in Oregon.
13. How 4-H teaches in Oregon.
14. Selection of methods to do a particular job.
15. Using the newspaper in extension teaching.
16. How to write a good news story.
17. Radio as an extension tool.
18. Circular and personal letters.
19. Publications, bulletins, etc.
20. Demonstrations: Method and result.

21. General meetings in Oregon.
22. Personal contacts: Farm visit, office calls.
23. How an extension specialist functions.
24. Photography.
25. Meetings.

This beginning course is followed by a workshop type course in which students analyze the background statistics for their own counties and make an intensive study of radio and TV. In addition, there is a reading course for those who wish to go farther in extension course work. Oregon hopes to give the beginning course to juniors, then offer summer county experience followed by the extension methods course in the senior year. As part of the advanced course they hope to arrange for a bus tour to acquaint students with county extension programs in operation. About 17 per cent of the students in these courses have gone into extension.

Washington State offers a general survey course, usually followed by a summer field course and then an 8-weeks' advanced course, all taught by John Dodge. Extension has not been able to keep up the field course in the last two years. The survey course has three general areas of study: (1) The history, background and objectives of extension; (2) program planning in extension, and (3) extension methods. Students are given a list of 100 basic questions for which they are to find the answers in their study. Kelsey's and Hearne's book is the text used. In the advanced course a problem approach is made. The students are required to submit for discussion two questions related to each class assignment. Over three years there have been about 60 men and women in the course, about one-third of whom want to go into extension.

Wyoming has a curriculum committee which passes on all courses including the extension courses offered to juniors and seniors, men and women. A required course as extension orientation for all students recently was denied by this committee. At present there are 26 in the extension class taught by W. T. Kirk. Eight of the class are foreign students. The course content is similar to that of Oregon.

The Kansas undergraduate extension courses are taught by Mr. Neff. In a 3-hour beginning course listed in the department of education they give a little different emphasis, he reported, to about the same things covered in the Oregon beginning course. He tries to get at discussion methods. Each student gives a demonstration and makes a survey. The 4-H staff and information staff assist with class for two weeks each. This course draws mainly juniors and in addition seniors and a few graduate students. A second course in home demonstration methods is taught by the State home demonstration leader. For seniors there is a problem course in which they make applications to their own situations of some observations gained in field activities.

In Colorado's course entitled "Extension Principles of Teaching," Mr. Stewart, the instructor, begins with a discussion of the objectives of extension. Subsequent topics include: A quick review of Federal, State and county staff organization; organization of lay leadership; organization procedures in agriculture, home demonstration, 4-H and YMW work with emphasis on how to tie together the work of the councils of the four groups into an overall program. As a climax to the course each student plans a single teaching job. This complete teaching plan becomes the term paper in the course. The second course offered

at Colorado is set up as a practicum. The instructor has listed 16 jobs which an extension worker carries out. Each student chooses two of these to use in practice. (Example: Give a 10 minute talk on extension work that you might have prepared as a new extension worker speaking before a civic club.) Each of the above courses carries 3 hours of credit for one quarter of work.

In the discussion which followed the panel presentation, it was learned that Oklahoma offers for home economics students three courses. These include one on history and basic principles of extension work, one on extension methods, and the third a field experience course in which sophomore students make trips to observe home economics teaching at work and extension activities in Payne County, Oklahoma.

Texas's extension course is placed in the agricultural education department and a good many agricultural education majors are taking the extension course.

New Mexico offers a freshman orientation course in which extension is discussed. In addition there are three extension courses listed in the catalog, one or more of which are activated at times upon demand. Extension staff members have helped teach these courses on occasion.

Nebraska is one of the few States in which the course instructors have been officially recognized as advisors to freshmen as well as more advanced students interested in extension work. Nebraska offers an undergraduate major in extension education. The field experience is done by students during the regular term with seven full weeks spent in a county especially selected for the purpose. In the selected trainer counties, the agents are under contract with the college and are given extra pay to carry out the duties of supervising student work.

Georgia has a department of agricultural extension training. Two or more of the courses included in the major are taken normally in the junior year. This is followed by one summer's field experience of two or more months' duration and a final course in the senior year. No college credit is given for field experience.

The group enumerated specific values gained from the undergraduate courses.

The panel was asked the questions: "What are the values to Extension of undergraduate courses in Extension education? To the student?" These answers were given by the group: Through these courses extension gets acquainted with students and has an opportunity to interest the best of them in extension as a career; those who enter extension employment get off at a faster start; without course work most of the training of new agents is by field experience affording no time for discussions of theory and principles which gives meaning to activities; the course makes it possible to judge better how to place students when they are ready for employment. There was general agreement that there is almost no differential in beginning salary for those who have taken extension courses.

The group could arrive at no agreement as to the best sequence in subject content of the courses. There was some discussion of the "proper" sequence to give such topics as extension history, philosophy, etc., in the undergraduate course. The panel members agreed that what the student wanted from the course

determined in part the sequence followed in presenting subject-matter. Some instructors try to end the beginning course with discussions of 4-H because students know most about 4-H; other instructors try to start with 4-H because that is where beginning students "are" in terms of their understanding of extension work.

There was some opinion that students are not mature enough to enjoy a discussion of the philosophy of extension until they are in the senior year. There was general agreement that the history of extension work should be brought in throughout the course, at appropriate places in discussion of other topics such as demonstrations.

What should go into a basic curriculum in extension education?

This question was answered for agriculture by Dean Kivlin, and for home economics in a paper prepared by Miss Ruth Noer, member of the committee. In Miss Noer's absence her paper was read by Miss Brumbaugh. No action was taken on these curricula since this is a matter for the Senate and individual colleges rather than the conference group. It was requested, however, that the home economics curriculum suggestions be spelled out in greater detail. There was apparent agreement that it is desirable to integrate at the college level the training of home economics and agricultural agents to assure their working together after employment, in a family approach.

The question was raised as to whether organic chemistry should be required in the undergraduate home economics course. In view of the early marriages and infrequent pursuit of advanced training for which organic chemistry is a prerequisite, the group thought that organic chemistry might be shifted to a graduate program rather than remain in the undergraduate curriculum.

One proposal advanced was that organic chemistry, if required, be taught by a food instructor rather than a chemist, since the former could make the application that would make the subject of more value to prospective extension agents.

There was general consensus that the same basic undergraduate training might be given extension agents and vocational agriculture or home economics teachers. There was some feeling that while some of the vocational education course work was of finest value in over-all training for extension agents, that in much of the vocational education curriculum there is over-emphasis on methods at the expense of basic scientific preparation. Effort to qualify in both extension and vocational education majors means a sacrifice by students of basic courses.

Some concern was expressed over "loading" too many extension courses into the curriculum. The group was in agreement that a number of extension staff members alternating as instructors throughout the extension course resulted in a lack of continuity that should be avoided.

III. Graduate Study for Extension Needs to be Given More Attention.

Dr. W. R. Horlacher, Dean of the Graduate School, Colorado A. & M. College, discussed extension graduate study needs and programs. He pointed out these reasons for graduate study:

- A. Personal satisfaction from acquiring more knowledge
- B. Gain knowledge to pass on to the people
- C. To learn how to teach
- D. Increased opportunities to do a better job and to advancement
- E. To keep ahead of farmers and homemakers
- F. Make up undergraduate deficiencies
- G. Mature people (women) returning to the professional field after absence of several years

Dean Horlacher indicated that extension workers need graduate training in three areas: (1) technical subject-matter, (2) how to teach, and (3) social services. He suggested that there be a committee to direct programs in extension education and that there be some clear thinking to set forth, for graduate study, problems in need of research, and to classify them. As motivation for graduate study, he proposed that extension:

- A. Create a climate within the institution which will cause administrators to encourage graduate study.
 - 1. List plans for graduate study in Program of Work
- B. Reward accomplishment (which should result from graduate study).
- C. Financial assistance:
 - 1. Scholarship system.
 - 2. Leave policy.
 - 3. Extension centers for extension workers.
 - a. Puts them on same basis as other staff members.

(Michigan has each Extension worker develop a program of professional improvement for himself.)

The Nebraska Professional Improvement Plan Meets a Need.

Elton Lux and Ethel Saxton, at request of the Senate Committee, discussed the Nebraska Professional Improvement Certificate Plan. (Copy of plan enclosed in letter to extension course instructors.) Mr. Lux described the background situation which led to the establishment of this unique plan. By offering work of graduate level, but in school of agriculture not in the graduate school, there is more freedom in what is offered. The plan allows some credits for work done in residence at the college, some at extension summer schools, and some credit for work done at home. The extension staff has full cooperation from deans, the associate director of extension, supervisors and county boards. Staff members are given three weeks of leave with one week only from annual leave.

To date, seven agents have obtained certificates and 100 more are in various stages of completion. Miss Saxton described the courses offered in home economics; Mr. Lux those offered in agriculture.

According to the plan, work completed is entered on the budget sheets and recognition given for professional improvement in promotions, academic rank and salaries. Chief value to the agent, according to Mr. Lux, is a systematic plan for professional improvement. It has the effect on the agents of getting them to take a long look at what they are doing aside from pressures of current activities.

A scholarship committee works with Mr. Lux and Miss Saxton; it advises that the younger agents go to out-of-State summer schools first. If there is any interest, the students are encouraged to work towards a master's degree rather than a certificate.

Discussion which followed the presentation of this plan indicated that the deans present think the work described is worth graduate credit, and with current emphasis on degrees, should be set up in the graduate school. The Nebraska staff, however, is of the opinion that the work can be put on a more practical level that agents want, if it is outside the graduate school. As it is, students can be given recognition for taking courses to make up deficiencies (prerequisites to graduate study) for which they could not earn credit in a graduate school.

IV. The Committee Recommendations to the Senate.

Dean Howe, of Kansas, the Graduate Council representative on the Senate Committee, reviewed for the conference group the report made last year by the Committee to the Senate of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. In introducing the report, Dean Howe explained that many of last year's recommendations were developed through conference discussions at the Northeastern regional meeting. The Committee proposed to the Senate the following:

A. General recommendations:

- (1) That each State develop a plan to provide for the coordination and integration of preservice, inservice, and graduate training activities.
 - a. That a person be appointed in each State, whose major official responsibility be the coordination and integration of such activities.
 - b. That each State set up a training committee with representatives from all segments of the institution concerned with training, including resident instruction, extension administration (involving agriculture, home economics, and 4-H,) supervisors, specialists, and county extension agents.

B. Preservice training.

- (1) The person who is responsible for preservice training should have had extension experience and should be currently participating in the extension program.
- (2) Those responsible for undergraduate training provide for students, from both agriculture and home economics, to participate jointly, insofar as possible, in all professional extension courses.
- (3) The extension director should recommend a person from his staff to advise, or assist in advising, college students regarding courses of study in agricultural and home economics extension.

C. Graduate study.

- (1) Each State should determine its personnel needs for the next five years and which members of its staff should be encouraged to pursue graduate work; arrange for the most satisfactory leave conditions possible; and if necessary, assist in securing fellowship aid to encourage adequate training.

- (2) A nation-wide survey of extension study-leave policies should be made in 1954.
- (3) To encourage graduate training for county workers, each State should make an effort to provide "roving agents" who will take over responsibilities of county workers on leave for graduate study.
- (4) At least one land-grant institution in the United States should provide a graduate curriculum major in supervision. Such a graduate program should be designed primarily to prepare experienced county workers for supervisory positions. It should be supported by a comprehensive research program in extension supervisory methods and procedures.
- (5) Each institution should review its current graduate study program for extension workers, to be sure that, under the pressure for short-term training in summer sessions and off-the-campus extension courses, high standards are maintained.
- (6) In evaluating the services of workers, administrators should give greater weight to professional improvement efforts, ability and production, and less to tenure alone.

The discussion which followed emphasized the desirability of (1) training coordination through a person in charge of training and a training committee and (2) "roving agents." It also pointed up difficulties that stand in the way of best developments along these lines. It was suggested that the Senate Committee should take a look at Extension Education Graduate School programs offered at the eight Land-Grant institutions offering such programs.

The work of the sub-committee was reported.

A progress report of the sub-committee on Undergraduate Courses in Extension Education was given by Miss Collings in the absence of the sub-committee chairman, Dr. Paul Miller of Michigan. The report briefly outlined the committee assignment, its purpose, and major activities to date. The major contribution which the committee envisions is a guidebook for instructors of undergraduate extension courses. The plan for a guidebook was outlined on the blackboard, and comments on the plan were invited. The group consensus seemed to be that the guidebook offers promise of real value to instructors.

In discussion, various members of the group proposed certain additions to the guidebook. It was suggested that after its completion, a course be arranged under an outstanding instructor at one of the regional extension summer schools for the undergraduate course instructors. The purpose would be to teach extension college instructors how to teach, using the guidebook as the text.

Tomorrow's emphasis as a director sees it.

Director Morrison, in discussing tomorrow's emphasis, pointed out that extension must look forward to expanding in ways not formerly envisioned. The Land-Grant Colleges, he said, must study urban problems and come up with solutions

to fit urban situations. At the same time, extension must get closer to farm people and their problems. This will require larger staffs, possibly a goal of one agricultural and one home economics agent to each 250 farm families.

Specifically, subject-matter-wise, Director Morrison indicated, extension must -

1. Continue to help improve the economic base and do it more effectively.
2. Improve marketing and consumer education, and do so on a broader scale.
3. Acquaint farm and urban people with problems of surplus, efforts toward parity of income, stabilizing prices, and with other agricultural policy matters.
4. In personnel, Director Morrison pointed out extension looks for:
 - (a) Subject-matter competence.
 - (b) Resourcefulness, ability to enlist others in helping to work out problems.
 - (c) Courage to face real problems.

In conclusion, Director Morrison emphasized that extension is not doing enough "pin-pointing" of graduate training to meet specific needs.

Federal Extension Service
U.S.D.A.

Persons in Attendance at Fourth Regional
Conference on Preservice and Graduate Training
For Extension Workers

Fort Collins, Colorado
May 12-14, 1954

Colorado	J. E. Morrison, Director of Extension Mrs. Clara Anderson, State Home Demonstration Agent W. R. Horlacher, Dean of Graduate School T. G. Stewart, State Supervisor of Agricultural Planning and Program Development
Georgia	Charles J. Bryant, Associate Agricultural Economist
Kansas	Harold Howe, Dean, Graduate School Leonard Neff, Associate Professor, Extension Service
Nebraska	Elton Lux, Administrative Assistant to Director of Extension Ethel Saxton, District Supervisor, Home Agents
New Mexico	A. E. Triviz, Assistant Director of Extension
Oklahoma	Norma Brumbaugh, State Home Demonstration Agent
Oregon	C. W. Smith, Assistant Director of Extension
Texas	Ben D. Cook, Assistant to Dean of Agriculture
Washington	John C. Dodge, State Extension Agent
Wisconsin	V. E. Kivlin, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture
Wyoming	W. T. Kirk, Assistant Director of Extension
Federal Extension	Mary L. Collings, Chief, Personnel Training Branch

Agenda for
EXTENSION CONFERENCE ON PRESERVICE AND GRADUATE TRAINING

Colorado A & M College
May 12-14, 1954

Wednesday, May 12

9:30 a.m.

Introductions - Senate Committee and State Representatives,
Plans for the Conference - Dean Kivlin, Wisconsin

What is being done about Recruitment?

What Guidance is given Students by Extension Personnel?

How does Extension keep in touch with Students on the Campus?

- Round table discussion by all State representatives.

12:00 noon

Lunch

1:30 p.m.

What are the values to Extension of Undergraduate Courses
in Extension Education? To the Student?

What should go into these Courses?

How can Extension Programs and Activities be used to enrich
the Training Experiences of Students in Extension and other Courses?

Is Field Experience Practical? How is Field Experience
Supervised? How Evaluated?

- A Panel Discussion: T. G. Stewart, Colorado, Chairman
J. C. Dodge, Washington; C. W. Smith, Oregon;
W. T. Kirk, Wyoming; Leonard Neff, Kansas

Discussion.

A Basic Curriculum in Extension Education for Students in
Agriculture - Dean Kivlin, Wisconsin

A Basic Curriculum in Extension Education for Students in
Home Economics - Ruth Noer, West Virginia

5:00 p.m.

Adjournment.

Thursday, May 13

9:00 a.m.

Graduate Training Needs and Programs -
For Agents? Supervisors? Specialists?
- Dean Horlacher, Colorado

Nebraska's Professional Improvement Certification Plan.
- Elton Lux, Ethel Saxton, Nebraska

12:00 noon

Lunch

1:30 p.m.

The Recommendations to the Land-Grant College Senate from
the Committee on Preservice and Graduate Training for
Extension Workers.

- Dean Howe, Kansas

A Progress Report of the Sub-Committee on Undergraduate
Courses in Extension Education.

- Mary L. Collings, Federal Extension Office

Discussion.

What is the Value of a State Training Committee?

How can such a Committee be made most Effective?

- Round table discussion by all State representatives.

5:00 p.m.

Adjournment.

Friday, May 14

9:00 a.m.

Reporting on Activities in the Training Program.
- Small work group sessions.

Tomorrow's Emphasis - How can we Train for it?
As an Extension Director sees it.
- Director Morrison, Colorado



